

FOCUS ... *On Human Services & Resources*

**A Newsletter for Family & Consumer Sciences Teachers and
others interested in Human Services & Resources**

LIFE AND HAPPINESS

While we may not always have the choice of what we do each day, we do have the choice of how we are feeling about what we are doing each day.

As summer approaches and teachers generally have a more relaxed schedule, perhaps you even have a little more control of what you do each day. As you make decisions about how you spend your time this summer, I hope you build in time of reflection as well as build things into your life that will bring you happiness.

Red Skelton lived by this credo: “Have a little laugh at life and look around you for happiness instead of sadness. Laughter has always brought me out of unhappy situations. Even in your darkest moment, you usually can find something to laugh about if you try hard enough.” Many of us have experienced times when it was hard to look for happiness instead of being swallowed up with sadness, and for a while that is quite normal and expected. But we cannot allow ourselves to stay there; we must look for something to laugh about—we must move on with life.

Some of us also need to be reminded that we are not responsible for the happiness of people around us—even though sometimes we think we are and act as if we are. Each person is ultimately responsible for his or her own happiness. In a way, as educators and parents isn’t that a liberating thought! As we interact with students and family members we need to remember what Marcus Aurelius said: “Very little is needed to make a happy life; it is all within yourself, in your way of thinking.” One of the greatest gifts we can give our students and our children is the understanding that happiness does not come from all of the things around us, it comes from within us.

Now that doesn’t mean that things around us don’t influence our happiness. But more often than not, it is the people around us and not the things around us that are the greatest influence. Oscar Wilde said, “Some (people) cause happiness wherever they go; others whenever they go.” Periodically, it behooves us to reassess what kind of people we are and how others are perceiving us. . . are we the one that bring joys to those around us or are we, instead, being a negative influence on those around us. Again, we are largely in control of that.

So, as you reflect on your life, think about what truly provides happiness in your life and build a big dose of that into your summer plans. You will find yourself rejuvenated and ready to face another school year. As Michael Jordan says, “Just play. Have fun. Enjoy the game.” Best wishes for a great summer!

Shirley Baum, Director of Family and Consumer Sciences
Human Services and Resources Career Field Specialist

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Happy Summer

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APRIL

10-11 FCCLA State Leadership Conference, Lincoln
26-29 ACTE Region 5 Meeting, Omaha

JUNE

5-8 Nebraska Career Education Conference, Kearney

JULY

9-13 FCCLA National Leadership Meeting, Nashville TN

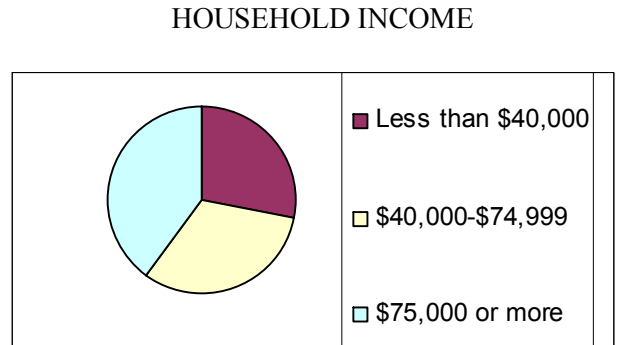
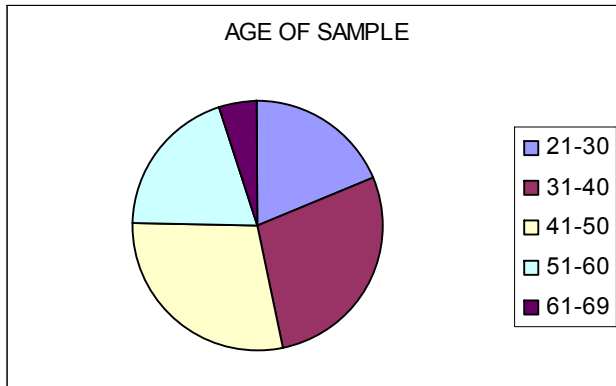
NOVEMBER

10-12 FCCLA Cluster Meeting; Pittsburgh and Phoenix
17-19 FCCLA Cluster Meeting; Charlotte and St. Louis
30-12/2 ACTE; Atlanta GA

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2005 NATIONAL SURVEY OF EMPLOYERS AND EMPLOYEES

The 2005 National Survey of Employers and Employees is a student undertaken by MetLife in the third quarter of 2005. The employee survey polled over 1200 full-time employees and the employer survey consisted of over 1500 interviews. Demographics of the participants in the employee study:



RESULTS OF SURVEYS:

Considerations rated most important to employees when deciding to join and/or remain with an employer:

- Quality of coworker and/or customer relationships—58%
- Opportunity for work/life balance—56%
- Working for an organization whose mission/purpose I agree with—54%
- Opportunity for financial growth and advancement—52%
- Opportunity for skill building and professional growth—51%

Benefits vary with company size

- Large companies are likely to offer the richest range of employer-paid and voluntary benefits and are most likely to make telecommuting available to employees.
- Smaller companies (fewer than 50 employees) are most likely to pay the full cost of their employees' medical insurance and more likely to offer flexible work hours.

A few other findings:

- Nearly one-quarter (22%) of all employees changed jobs over the past eighteen months.
- The top concern for employers is "recruiting and retaining" (74%).
- Traditional job selection criteria (opportunity for financial growth and advancement and the opportunity for skill building and professional growth) were ranked as least important by the 05-06 respondents.
- Nearly one-third (31%) of employees cite benefits as an important reason why they came to work for their employer, up from 25% in the two previous years.
- While experts believe that most Americans will likely live 20-40 years in retirement, today's employees are planning for only 19 years of post-retirement living; about one-third (37%) are planning for over 21 years.

For the complete report, visit the MetLife website at: www.metlife.com



ORAL HEALTH IN NEBRASKA CHILDREN

Tooth decay (dental caries) is one of the most common chronic diseases of childhood, according to the 2000 report of the Surgeon General, even though it is largely preventable. Untreated childhood caries can lead to delayed growth, impaired speech development and ultimately impacts a child's ability to learn and thrive. Childhood

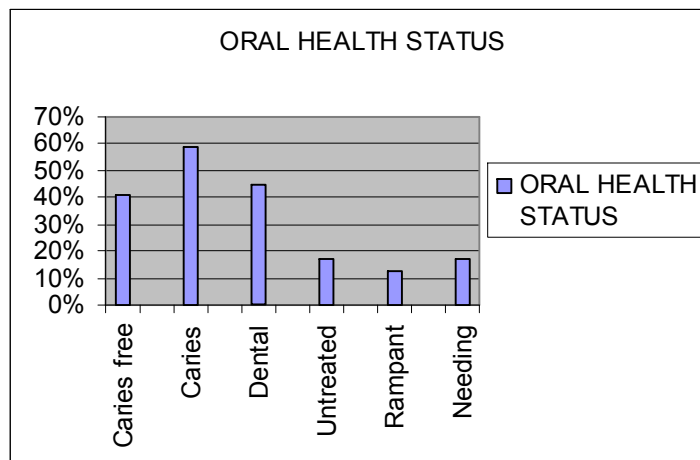
dental caries can be prevented by

- A balanced diet, including restricted consumption of beverages and food containing fermentable carbohydrates.
- Good dental hygiene for the entire family
- Regular, dental visits
- Use of fluoride—the most effective prevention on the smooth surfaces of teeth
- Dental sealant—the most effective means of dental caries prevention on molars

To establish a baseline for monitoring oral disease status and trend in Nebraska Children, the Department of Health and Human Services partnered with several organizations to conduct the first, statewide assessment of oral health in third grade school children. Over 2000 third grade children from 45 elementary schools (public and private) were involved in the study.

KEY FINDINGS:

1. Dental caries is a significant public health problem for Nebraska school children, with approximately 60% of children experiencing dental disease by the third grade and 17% having untreated dental decay or cavities.
2. Children from lower-income schools tend to have poorer oral health; approximately 30% of children from low-income schools have untreated dental caries.
3. Minority children experience poorer oral health, with approximately 28% of minority children having untreated dental decay and 20% having rampant caries.
4. Although dental sealants are a proven method for preventing disease, only half of Nebraska's school children have received this preventive care.



AMONG THE RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Increase efforts to educate families about the important of oral health as a part of total health, especially with pregnant and new mothers.
2. Continue to promote the efficacy of fluoridated water to Nebraska's communities.
3. Increase efforts to educate about the importance of fluoride applications and sealants.
4. Target public health and dental disease prevention programs to reduce disparities.

Source: Nebraska Health and Human Services System,
Open Mouth Survey of Third Graders—Nebraska 2005



TEACHER QUALITY

Research studies have long supported the idea that teachers are the most important school-related factor in student achievement. In 2003, Jennifer King Rice, an Economic Policy Institute Research Associate, published a book entitled, “Teacher Quality: Understanding the Effectiveness of Teacher Attributes” in which the following statements are found:

Teacher experience

- Several studies have found a positive effect of experience on teacher effectiveness; specifically, the “learning by doing” effect is most obvious in the early years of teaching.

Teacher preparation programs and degrees

- Research suggests that the selectivity/prestige of the institution a teacher attended has a positive effect on student achievement, particularly at the secondary level. This may partially be a reflection of the cognitive ability of the teacher.
- Evidence suggests that teachers who have earned advanced degrees have a positive impact on high school mathematics and science achievement when the degrees earned were in these subjects.
- Evidence regarding the impact of advanced degrees at the elementary level is mixed.

Teacher certification

- Research has demonstrated a positive effect of certified teachers on high school mathematics achievement when the certification is in mathematics.
- Studies show little clear impact of emergency or alternative-route certification on student performance in either mathematics or science, as compared to teachers who acquire standard certification.

Teacher coursework

- Teacher coursework in both the subject area taught and pedagogy contributes to positive education outcomes.
- Pedagogical coursework seems to contribute to teacher effectiveness at all grade levels, particularly when coupled with content knowledge.
- The importance of content coursework is most pronounced at the high school level.
- While the studies on the field experience component of teacher education are not designed to reveal causal relationships, they suggest positive effects in terms of opportunity to learn the profession and reduced anxiety among new teachers.

Teachers’ own test scores

- Tests that assess the literacy levels or verbal abilities of teachers have been shown to be associated with higher levels of student achievement.
- Studies show the National Teachers Examination and other state-mandated tests of basic skills and/or teaching abilities are less consistent predictors of teacher performance.

SOME APRIL “FOOLISH” QUESTIONS

1. How can you tell when you have run out of invisible ink?
2. If flying is so safe, why do they call the airport the terminal?
3. If most accidents occur within five miles of home, why don’t people just move?
4. How many weeks are there in a light year?
5. Why do you press harder on a remote control when you know the battery is dead?



NEBRASKA CAREERS IN LAW, PUBLIC SAFETY AND SECURITY

The Department of Labor, in the Nebraska Career Compass section of their website, provides data related to jobs in Nebraska. Here is some of the information related to this career cluster.

HOT JOBS!!!

Lawyers	It is estimated that there will be 81 openings resulting in a growth rate of 15.27%. The average hourly wage is \$47.33; professional degree required.
Paralegals & Legal Assistants	22 estimated annual openings; growth rate of 26.98%; average hourly wage of \$17.21; associates degree.
Correctional Officers and Jailers	59 estimated annual openings; growth rate of 8.46%; average hourly wage of \$13.78; moderate-term on-the-job training.
Police and Sheriff's Patrol Officers	82 estimated annual openings; growth rate of 10.10%; average hourly wage of \$17.14; long-term on-the-job training.
Security Guards	190 estimated annual openings; growth rate of 21.77%; average hourly wage of \$11.01; short-term on-the-job training.

FIRE PROTECTION TECHNOLOGY PROGRAM

Fire service and related industries provide education about, prevention of, and suppression of fire in their communities. They are also involved with providing emergency medical care, specialized and technical rescue, response to terrorist attacks, and mitigation of hazardous materials releases in their area. They provide investigative services to determine cause of fires and to determine costs to restore property after a fire has occurred.



The spotlight this issue is on the program available through Southeast Community College. It is a 6-8 quarter program which mean from 18-24 months in duration. The Fire Protection Technology Program at SCC is fully accredited by the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools. Upon successful completion of the program the students will be awarded an Associate of Applied Science degree.

Students have the opportunity to take state certification tests for Firefighter I, Fire Instructor I, Hazardous Material Awareness Level, and Hazardous Materials First Responder Operation Level in cooperation with the Training Division of the Nebraska State Fire Marshal. They are also eligible to test for the National Registry Emergency Medical Technician Basic while in the program. Additional levels of certification are available in cooperation with the Iowa Fire Service Training Bureau.

For more information, go to: <http://www.southeast.edu>



FIVE KEY LESSONS LEARNED FROM KATRINA

The Winter 2006 issue of *Healthy States Quarterly*, a publication of the Council of State Governments, contained these lessons learned from Katrina.

1. *Make sure your laws allow the state government to take over operations normally controlled by local governments if they are unable to function.* In Louisiana, for instance, the state had to step in to set up and operate a regional morgue when the coroner's office in New Orleans was flooded. Local coroners usually are in charge of the morgue.
2. *Define the coverage volunteer health professionals will have in your state should a disaster occur.* States needed to deal with the question of who would provide liability and worker's compensation coverage for the health professionals who came from other states to help care for the injured. Some states covered them as state employees while others became temporary volunteer employees of the federal government.
3. *Adopt rules and procedures to accept the licensure or certification of volunteer health professionals from other states.* All states have different standards for licensure. States responding to Katrina had to deal with how medical personnel would be allowed to practice without normal procedures.
4. *Consider supplementing federal disaster funding with state funds.* Most states rely on federal funds for disaster preparedness.
5. *Conveniently stockpile all necessary supplies.* In Louisiana nearly all hospitals had generators, but they soon ran out of fuel. Strategically placed fuel reserves could have helped keep them operating.

NEBRASKA YOUNG DRIVER LAWS

Consent of a parent or guardian is required for a minor to be licensed. At any time, the person who consented can revoke the consent, and the permit or license will be cancelled.

First Stage

To get a learner's permit you must be at least 15 and pass a written test. After getting a learner's permit you may not drive unless supervised.

Intermediate Stage

To get a provisional operator's permit you must be at least 16, drive at least 50 hours while supervised or complete driver education, pass a written exam and driving test. After getting a provisional operator's permit you may not drive between midnight and 6 am unless supervised.

Full Licensure

These restrictions end after 1 year or at 18, whichever comes first.

GRADUATED DRIVER LICENSING

Most states have some type of graduated driver licensing. According to the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS), the crash risk per mile for a 15-yr old driver is twice the risk faced by an 18-19 year old and about seven times the risk for a 30-59 year old driver.

Among the recommendations from IIHS to strengthen the graduated driver licensing laws are:

- The minimum age for a person to get a learner's permit should be 16.
- Some of the driving hours during the intermediate stage should be completed at night.
- Night time driving bans should begin between 9-10 pm. Exceptions may be made for work, school or volunteer activities.
- Teenage passengers should be limited to none or one without adult supervision.
- The intermediate stage should last until the driver is at least 18.

For more information, visit www.iihs.org



MCC PLANS NEW CULINARY FACILITY

The Nebraska Association of Family and Consumer Sciences met in March on the Metropolitan Community College Fort Omaha campus. The welcome reception featured hors d'oeuvres created by the culinary arts students and the dinner that evening was prepared and served by the students. Several students spoke to the group about their experiences and future plans; we also observed students learning how to create ice sculptures.

Earlier that week, it was announced that there are plans to renovate the historic Mule Barn and build another building next to it to house the growing culinary arts program. Within the next two years, it is anticipated that the \$12 million project will result in a facility of 18,000 square feet (Mule Barn) and a total of 28,000 square feet including the new construction.

A few tidbits of information about the program:

- The culinary arts program has received national awards and is ranked among the top 40 cooking schools in the nation according to the www.cookingschools.com web site.
- The program has 504 students last fall as compared to 38 in 1991.
- There is a waiting list of 40-50 students each semester to enter the program.
- The new facility will have five kitchens; the present one has only one.

For additional information:

See the article in the March 20th issue of the Omaha World-Herald or
Contact Jim Trebbien, Director of the Culinary Arts Program
Phone: 402-449-8301

Other Nebraska institutions with programs in this career cluster are:

CENTRAL COMMUNITY COLLEGE—HASTINGS CAMPUS

Program Name: Hotel/Motel/Restaurant Management

Contact: Rhonda Nesiba and Jaye Kieselhorst at 402-463-9811

SOUTHEAST COMMUNITY COLLEGE—LINCOLN CAMPUS

Program Name: Food Service/Hospitality

Contact: Jo Taylor at 402-471-3333

UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA-LINCOLN

Program Name: Culinology

Contact: Fayrene Hamouz at 402-472-1582



A BAD MARRIAGE COULD MAKE YOU ILL

By ANDREW HERRMANN, Staff Reporter, Chicago Sun-Times, March 27, 2006.

Unhappy couples sometimes say their spouse makes them sick. As it turns out, they may be right. Bad marriages can be detrimental to one's health -- especially, new research shows, as aggravated couples age. The study, financially supported by the federal National Institute on Aging, reports that marital strain is a key source of stress, which can affect one's immune system. But unhappiness also affects people's opinion of how healthy they are.

The findings are not necessarily a call for divorce. Indeed, much research indicates that marriage is good for people, helping them live longer, happier and more prosperous lives. Instead, the study should be considered "yet another reason to identify marital difficulties and seek to improve marital quality" because "your very health may depend on it," writes Debra Umberson of the University of Texas-Austin, the study's lead researcher.

Conflict makes people feel sick

In the paper, titled "You Make Me Sick: Marital Quality and Health Over the Life Course," Umberson and her fellow researchers analyzed 1,049 married folks in three waves of interviews. In determining quality of marriage, the researchers asked, on a five-point scale, "How satisfied are you with your marriage?" They also asked whether the respondent's spouse was willing to listen to problems, and how much their spouse makes them feel loved. The married participants were also asked how often they feel "bothered or upset by your marriage" and how often "the two of you typically have unpleasant disagreements or conflicts." The answers were compared with the participants' responses reflecting how they describe their health.

The researchers acknowledge that it is possible, in some couplings, the scenario works backward: poor health affects how people feel about their marriages. The stress of caring for an ill person or the orneriness of a sick spouse can turn once-happy marriages miserable. But the researchers say more often it's a case of personal conflict making people feel sick. This is particularly the case as people get older -- "marital difficulties appear to matter more for our health as we age," the researchers say. Why? For one, spouses become more important psychologically as people age because of the loss of other key figures in their life, the researchers say.

Worse than divorce?

Umberson notes that earlier research has found evidence linking good social relationships to health and long life. "The married do exhibit better health than the unmarried but it is not the case that any marriage is better than no marriage at all when it comes to health benefits. The quality of relationships is also linked to health," she wrote.

Previous studies have found that individuals in "low quality" marriages exhibit "an even greater health risk than do divorced individuals," Umberson said. Scientists have known that marital difficulties are often a source of chronic stress, but bickering "may have long-term consequences for overall health status," she adds.

The study appeared in this month's *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, a publication of the American Sociological Association.

Source: <http://www.suntimes.com/output/news/cst-nws-marry27.html#>



AN AMENDED GUIDE TO CALORIE BURNING

A few years ago, when Corene Herbster (retired teacher from Lincoln Southeast) was the newsletter editor of the Nebraska Association of Family and Consumer Sciences, she included this article as a sure fire way to burn those extra calories. The author is unknown, but as you end another school year take some time out for a stress-reducer and calculate how many calories you burned this school year.

Beating around the bush—10
Climbing the walls—35
Passing the Buck—25
Pushing your luck—50
Wading through paperwork—100
Jumping on the bandwagon—10
Running around in circles—25
Tooting your own horn—minus 125
Adding fuel to the fire—50
Making mountains out of molehills—75
Practicing what you preach—1,000
Jumping to conclusions—15
Swallowing your pride— 500
Dragging your heels—minus 100
Hitting the nail on the head—350
Bending over backwards—500
Balancing the books—125
Eating crow—225
Pulling out the stops—50
Throwing your weight around—zero to 100 (depending on your weight)
Climbing the ladder of success—350

THINGS TO PONDER

“It is not fair to ask of others what you are not willing to do yourself.” -Eleanor Roosevelt

“Be ashamed to die until you have won some victory for humanity.” - Horace Mann

“Good leadership consists of showing average people how to do the work of superior people.”
-John D. Rockefeller

“The most beautiful thing we can experience is the mysterious. It is the source of all true art and science.”
-Albert Einstein

“When people are more successful than they had imagined, nothing is ever achieved without giving something up.”
-Judith M. Bardwick